

**Presentations:**

Dr Narveshwar Sinha, Chairman of Ideal Charity will be presenting the recent work on Downs Syndrome at the British Academic Conference in Otolaryngology to be held in Liverpool from 8<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> July.

## Hearing Charity in Less Developed Countries: Bringing Multiple Agencies Together

### A Case Study

Poster presentation, British Academic Conference in Otolaryngology, 8-10 July 2009

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#### Introduction

Hearing impairment is very common in children with Downs Syndrome. Three agencies in UK (IDEAL Charity- a hearing charity in UK, Downs Syndrome Education International (UK) and an ENT Consultant in UK with special interest in hearing in Downs Syndrome children) cooperated with three agencies abroad (Downs Syndrome Education International, Madras Education and Research Foundation, Chennai, India and All India Institute of Speech and Hearing, Mysore, India) to provide audiology support to Downs Syndrome children in India.

#### IDEAL Charity, UK

A charity registered with Charities Commissions of England and Wales with objectives of advancing the education of deaf persons in less developed countries particularly by provision of education, training, equipment and funding of education.

Representative: Dr Narveshwar Sinha (special interest in medical technology transfer between developed and less developed countries) Chairman of IDEAL Charities (UK)

#### Downs Syndrome Education International (UK)

Down Syndrome Education International works to improve education for young people with Down syndrome (with chances of hearing impairment). The charity conducts its work in public and down in all areas of development, including speech, language, literacy, cognition and memory.

Representative: Mr Frank Buckley, CEO and Ms Julie Hughes, Speech and Language Therapist

#### The ENT and Hearing Clinic for Children with Downs Syndrome

NHS Clinic at Manchester Children's Hospitals

Representative: Mr Patrick Sheehan, Paediatric Otolaryngologist with special interest in Down's Syndrome children

#### Madras Education and Research Foundation, Chennai, India (MERF)

MERF has been in the forefront of the Cochlear Implant scenario in India and today has one of the largest Cochlear Implant clinics not only in India but the whole of South Asia.

Representative: Dr Mohan Kamashwaran, Director of the Organisation

#### All India Institute of Speech and Hearing Mysore, India (AIISH)

AIISH is the only institute in the whole of South Asia, which brings together the activities of research, education, public education, training and clinical services in speech and hearing on a single platform.

Representative: Dr Vijayalakshmi Basavaraj, Director of the Institute

#### Downs Syndrome Federation of Tamil Nadu, India

An institution that offers support to individuals with Downs Syndrome and their families

Representative: Dr Rekha Ramchandran, Chair Person of the organisation

#### Objectives

To evaluate the impact of cooperation between multiple agencies on the effectiveness of hearing charity activities in less developed countries

#### Some Key Points

- Gaining a comprehensive understanding of the other agencies
- Understanding the cultural and social context of working with the target audience
- Maintaining consistency of interagency relationships by copying all correspondence to all agencies involved in all agencies in a project
- Knowing clearly what all agencies have agreed to
- Having a bank to negotiate from when unexpected problems arise

#### Developing Interagency Protocols

(Modified from WA SAAP Protocols)

- Identify the need for protocols for interagency work
- Gain support from within your service for the development of protocols
- Identify the issues that you would like protocols to cover
- Identify which services may want to be involved, and arrange a meeting to discuss common issues
- Identify the issues or barriers that may arise in negotiations with the other agencies
- Establish joint commitment to the establishment of protocols, and a process for their development
- Develop and document the protocols and implement
- Monitor and evaluate the protocols
- End of process

#### Conclusions

Individual agencies conduct valuable Audiology activities in less developed countries with variable success. Successful interagency cooperation can bring strengths and specialization of various members together. This proves effective to the beneficiaries in less developed countries. Cross-cultural differences are difficult to bridge. At least one agency member should have exposure to cultures of the other agencies and less developed countries. This model brings together various individuals from different agencies to work for a common goal. Cooperation between the six agencies combine the resources of all to develop interagency protocols and bridging the cultural differences of both the developed and less developed countries. This model brings together various agencies in UK and abroad to work together for a common goal. Cooperation between the six agencies may be the key.

#### Key Messages

- A project champion has a pivotal role in bringing agencies together. 'Project Champion' should be someone with the culture of both developed and less developed countries.
- Excellent communication between different agencies is required for the project to be successful. Communication flow between the agencies needs to be moderated by the 'project champion'.
- Community education in the less developed country is required to motivate the targeted audience. Community leader may only communicate with the 'project champion' for the project.
- A 'cultural ambassador' to develop formal interagency protocols. Informal verbal targeted protocols work well when the other agency understands them fully. Role of 'project champion' is crucial in clarifying these protocols to all agencies.
- Ethical considerations should always be the top priority even when working in less developed countries.